

# The Spirit

## This Month's Focus: Faith and the College Student

By Roseangela Fracchiolla

"Just have a little faith." We have all heard that saying before. For some it may come in times of tragedy, or for others it may just provide support before receiving that dreaded final grade. It is a saying that blankets a multitude of emotions and fills the gap between what we want and reality. For some, faith has a spiritual significance, for others it may be a belief in "something," and for some it may mean nothing at all. As college students, life decisions are constantly looming in the distance, and as days pass that distance becomes shorter and shorter. It is a time of transition in our lives when we either tap into our faith or move away from it; yet, what is faith and what does it mean to us?

As college freshmen, we are bright-eyed, bushy tailed, morally centered individuals who come to find that our faith is tested inside and outside of the classroom. We no longer have faith in what our parents have taught us but rather in our social surroundings, and often the idea of having faith no longer truly exists; it seems that faith is not synonymous with belief but rather trust and where we are placing our trust. Faith and belief are being replaced with buzzwords: YouTube it, tweet me, or the current craze, four loko. As much as I love all my Tweeps, we must call a spade and spade; maybe a more fitting buzzword for the times is demoralization. In these turbulent times there is an exceedingly high amount of pressure put on us to repair the damage that has been done as the so called "future" of this country. No wonder we choose to escape with alcoholic energy drinks and by watching videos of parrots whipping their hair back and forth.

When exploring the word trust, I

immediately remember the game often played during recess in elementary school; one person closes their eyes and falls back, trusting, hoping that the other person will be there to catch them before they fall. As college students we are in that butterflies-in-our stomachs jittery stage of "falling," with an incredible amount of uncertainty if there will be someone or something there to catch us. You can't help but wonder if our dependency on media is a result of a fear that we will fall into an unknown. It helps knowing that no matter what, when I turn on my computer that social aspect of life will never be tested.

Yet not as much can be said of our own fate once we leave college. Suddenly we are faced with the hard truth that our degrees may not be sufficient enough to help us find that dream job we have always been searching for. A recent study in the New York Times states that the average starting salary for college graduates is down and employers plan to make only five percent more job offers to new graduates this spring compared to last spring. The statistics don't lie and with concrete evidence telling us otherwise, how is it that we have not completely lost our faith in the future? Sophomore Jessica Penora sheds some light on the issue: "Although we are faced with difficult times, it is happening to all of us. People are doing what they have to do to succeed, and ultimately it brings us together."

Our country's history shows us that in times of trouble, we find a way to come together. The most unique aspect of these times is that diversity is everywhere and hope is never in recession. It could be that we have stumbled upon the right idea. The media is constantly tightening their hold on our lives, but now, especially as college students, we are gaining that control back.

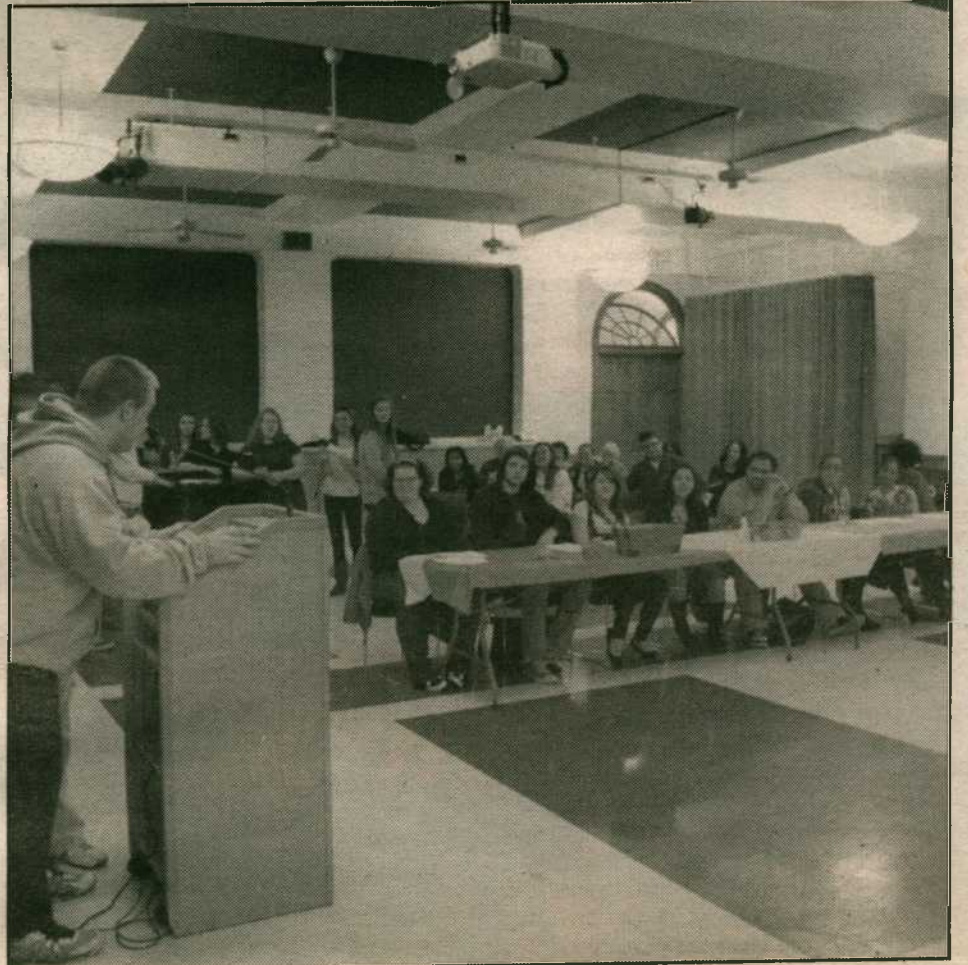


Photo Credit: Robert Jurman

SJC students gather at a multi-denominational "Breads of the World" event sponsored by Campus Ministry.

We are using these 21st century technologies to connect with each other and share the burden we are all experiencing. Every day brings forth new uncertainties and maybe we haven't seen "change" in the job market, but that's not the only type of change to be seen. There is change in our outlook; we are beginning to trust again in the power an

individual has to make a difference. After all this time filled with distrust and loss of faith we are suddenly repairing the damage, with a glimmer of hope for the future. Let's get back to that unique freshman attitude we once possessed and realize that having faith can simply just mean closing your eyes and letting go.

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### Staff Photographers:

Daniella Giordano, Robert Jurman, Lisa Murphy, Abigail Verbit, Erin Watters

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sjcnewspaper@student.sjcnj.edu

## The Portal Project: A New Tech Age is Set to Begin at SJC

By Joey Naddeo

Back when we were all enjoying the last sweltering hot days of summer and gearing up for a new semester, the St. Joseph's College Information and Technology Department was beginning work on the future of the on-line student experience. "The Portal Project," the name given to the technology by developer Datatel (who also provides most of the software used at St. Joseph's), is what Kenneth

McCollum, the newly crowned head of the IT department, calls an "enhanced communication device."

Capable of greatly increasing communication between students and faculty via social networking tools, this renovation is implemented with utility in mind, putting access to every website we'll probably ever need as students at St. Joseph's College on one web page. With only one log in required, this means that checking your email, registering for classes, and seeing school announcements can be done

faster than ever.

The Portal Project will be fully customizable by the user, allowing students to tailor fit it to their personal informational needs, with features including daily planners and organizers as well as easy access via phones and other portable Internet-ready devices (PDAs, ipods, tablets, etc.). Between 5 and 7 teams are currently working on implementing this system, which is expected to be up sometime during the 2011 Fall semester.



Student Life & Academics: Meet the new Freshman Class Reps



Arts & Entertainment: Feed me! Our review of "Little Shop of Horrors."



Sports: Get an insider's look on soccer at SJC.



# Is St. Joe's Becoming Overcrowded?

By Kristen McMaster

Most people who know of St. Joseph's college think of it as the quaint little college in Downtown Brooklyn, mostly for local New York City students. Lately, this may be the last thought I have about St. Joseph's. With the influx of enrollment and the low tuition compared to other local colleges, St. Joseph's is becoming the crowded college in the beautiful neighborhood of Clinton Hill.



Kristen McMaster

When I was a freshman I joined the SJC community with about 145 other hopeful students. I chose St. Joseph's as my college because it was small. I went to a small high school and I knew I liked that atmosphere. I fell in love with the campus and I really loved the small class sizes. It was comforting to know that my professor would actually know my name and my face, and that I wasn't some number in a computer system. This was the dream campus life I wanted. By the second week of my freshman year I could name everyone in my year, and by the end of the month I knew everyone's name in the school. This was because I saw everyone almost once a day through the halls, in class, or at an event.

Now, as a junior, I still have about the same amount of students in my year, but I was joined by two of the highest incoming classes in SJC history. The class of 2013 had about 205 students, a record breaking number at the time, but the class of 2014 shattered that number with over 250 students, plus over 30 transfers. That means that the total number of students accepted to SJC in 2010 was over 290! Within one year the incoming class grew by about 50 students and if this becomes a trend I fear for the class sizes and the student-to-teacher ratio that everyone loves. For most colleges or universities 300 students is a very small number, but for SJC it's a lot, maybe even too much.

The truth is that SJC does not have the space for this many students, and without further ex-



Photo Credit: Daniella Giordano

Students in Evodio's Place at lunchtime. Are they packed in too tight or just right?

pansion the campus will permanently lose the small charm it once had. Now, in my junior year, I see a new face every day. I have noticed so many changes on campus that show that the campus is too small for the number of students being accepted. Somehow the extra cafeteria tables have made their way into the Bear's Den, OUTSIDE of the cafeteria, and you are probably wondering how there is room for couches and cafeteria tables in that small den. Don't worry: that was simply addressed by removing the couches and placing them in the least used lounge on campus, the Cantina in St. Angela Hall. I've also seen changes in the classrooms themselves as more desks are being added to different classes. I see overcrowding at events

held at Common Hour as well. No matter how many chairs are set up for an event there is always the need for more. Many people think that this is great because more people are going to events, but if you really look around it's the same people attending the events plus the new freshmen, but the people who haven't attended events in the past still aren't attending events.

Monetarily I am sure the influx of freshmen is wonderful for St. Joseph's and I am so happy to see it become such a popular college, but as a member of Student Government I have noticed negative monetary effects. As much money as they bring in for the college tuition-wise, the freshmen are still using up lots of resources and the student activities fees are paying

for it. As SGA Treasurer I have noticed that the amount of money being spent on food for events has increased drastically and the amount of supplies needed is also on the rise. Where in past years the supply order would go out monthly, this year they go out weekly, maybe even bi-weekly!

I hope that in years to come St. Joseph's does expand and become a college fit for more than five hundred students, but until that happens the college needs to stop pretending it has the room and the resources for more classes of over 250 students. The problem of overcrowding needs to be addressed quickly or eventually St. Joseph's College will become "standing room only."

## Meet New Freshman Class Reps, Sophia Bellegarde and Chris Townes

By Diana Kessel

As we're almost through with the semester, we know that St. Joseph's is a school heavily dedicated to extracurricular and Student Life. One major part of Student Life is our student government and the subdivision of the class reps. Though we saw posters and fliers all over campus for the three candidates for Freshman Class Representative, only one (or in the case, two) could win. Let's get to know

the Freshman reps for 2010-2011, Sophia Bellegarde and Chris Townes!

Sophia comes from Miami, Florida and attended William H. Turner Technical High School. On campus, she is a Student Ambassador, recently joined the Fashion Club, and can be seen at just about all on-campus events. Her favorite event at SJC so far has been the "Live Life in the Front Row" seminar with Jon Vroman because "I believe in living for today. Tomorrow is never promised. He [Jon Vroman] stated that our deepest

fear is that we are inadequate. I live by that." It seems Sophia has no reason to have this fear. In Miami she owns a summer camp she co-founded called "Leading for Tomorrow," which is a nonprofit organization that allows inner-city kids to attend camp for free and gain cultural insight they wouldn't otherwise have a chance to be a part of. She is also the head of the Fine Arts department at the camp. The goal of the camp is to "Promote education and creativity through fine arts."

One of Sophia's main platforms while running for Freshman Rep was that she would be working as a student, for the students. "It came from personal experience. There are no calculus tutors, and that is something I'm in need of. There has to be more people with this problem, so why not run to give the chance to help others with similar and other situations?"

As someone who wants to act not as a politician but as a friend, it's only fitting that she decided to run with Brooklyn-bred Christopher Townes. Chris currently lives in Queens and attended St. John's Prep. He came to SJC because of the excellent Education department, where he is a Child Study Major. Around campus he is a member of the Dance Club (specializing in Hip-Hop), Fashion Club, and Chapel Players. He also plans to pledge the Fraternity, Beta Psi Alpha.

He hopes to become well known in New York City as a teacher with values based in hard work and a dedication to helping kids who need it. He decided to run for Freshman

"I am always around my fellow classmates listening to what they have to say. I want to deal with their problems and try to make a solution for them, not because I want to seem cool but because I actually care about them as a friend."

- Chris Townes

Rep because not only was it a great way to get involved, but as he says, "I am always around my fellow classmates listening to what they have to say. I want to deal with their problems and try to make a solution for them, not because I want to seem cool but because I actually care about them as a friend." Chris, who is a familiar and friendly face around school already, had some wise words to the class he now represents, "I encourage all freshman who struggle with a certain class to try and find a tutor... or come to me and I'll find someone for you. Work will always be stressful; (if) you get knocked down just get up and dust yourself off."

The drive and determination of our new Freshman Reps are sure to lead them to do wonderful things for the class of 2014, but it is the positive attitudes of both Sophia and Chris that will most help them make this year the best it can be for all of St. Joe's.



Staff Photo

Newly elected Freshman Class Representatives Sophie Bellgrade and Chris Townes representing at the FYE "Breakfast for Lunch" Common Hour event.



# From the Desk of the President

By Nina Zito

I hope everyone is having a productive, successful semester. For all of those who don't know, my name is Nina Zito and I am the Student Government President for the 2010-2011 school year. I was the Secretary of Student Government last year and as a graduating senior, I wanted to maintain a leadership role at SJC.

Student Government offers students an opportunity to showcase their leadership potential on campus. I work closely with Vice President Sean Dorso, Secretary Catherine Muldoon, Treasurer Kristen McMaster and Parliamentarian Justin Burke to

make sure the needs of the students are met and heard! I believe that communication and collaboration are essential when working with others to achieve a goal.

There are a variety of ways for students to get involved in Student Government. Are you involved in any clubs or organizations? At the end of every school year, clubs elect a new executive board and just think, their future President could be YOU! In my freshman year at SJC, I was the editor in chief of the school newspaper and yearbook. I was involved in many clubs and organizations and eventually, I earned a spot on Student

Government. There are also opportunities to serve on Senate, run for Campus Activities Board or Class Representative and participate in College Advisory Council.

My challenge to you is to become involved in extra-curricular activities at SJC. Is there anything you want to know? Ask us! Student Government and Campus Activities Board are located in the Office of Student Life in Tuohy Hall. We are eager to get to know each and everyone one of you. Everyone is a leader in his or her own way and I look forward to continuing to work hard with and for all of you this year!

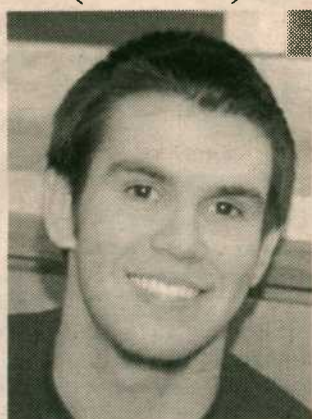


Photo Credit: Lisa Murphy

SGA President Nina Zito checks in with what's happening in and around your Student Government.

## Word Around Campus: Can you still be a faithful follower without attending services at your place of worship?

Ray Morales  
(Junior)



Those who live a contemplative life with strict and diligent measures are of those who have the disciplinary nature of attending their place of worship. Others who do not live this type of life observe no need to attend their place of worship simply for the fact that they do not preserve the disciplinary nature that is needed. What must be kept in consideration is the matter that it is imperative to attend mass or seminar or anything of that nature to conserve faith and belief.

Sean Dorso  
(Senior)



Yes, because being faithful is about how much you believe in God; not how someone else tells you to believe in him.

Elizabeth Fiorella  
(Junior)



Yes. However, I think it is important to attend these services because they help guide you in living a faithful life, and remind you of what it means to be faithful. They also provide you with time set aside to focus solely on your beliefs.

Crystal Tejada  
(Junior)



Yes. Having faith is something you feel within and doesn't always have to be expressed externally, but at times one may feel guilty for not attending a service at your place of worship.

Daniel Velez  
(Senior)



Yes, it is possible for a person to be a faithful follower without worshipping at a specific place. I am a Catholic, and I feel that it is just an institution. I believe in God, not a religious institution.

Justin Burke  
(Senior)



No, I don't believe it is possible for a person to be a faithful follower without worshipping at a specific place. I am a practicing Catholic who attends mass regularly. Although I disagree with some of the opinions of the church, I feel it is necessary to attend mass because it reminds you of your faith.

Jessy Dangboonrueng  
(Sophomore)



Yes, the reason is because I believe that being a faithful follower in any religion stems from a deep understanding and passion at the heart of a person, not simply attending a place of worship. One may attend a place of worship on a regular basis and still not become a faithful follower.

Joanna Marciniak  
(Junior)



Yes, there are many ways in which an individual can be faithful to their religion. It doesn't necessarily mean that you have to go to church every Sunday. Everyone has their own ways of being faithful and as long as you follow your beliefs you don't have to attend services at your place of worship.

Nina Zito  
(Senior)



I believe you can still be a faithful follower without attending services at your place of worship because you can do several spiritual activities outside of your church that prove your loyalty to the church and God. For example, I have taken part in retreats to better understand myself and become closer to God, pray, respect all races and ethnicities, and love my family and friends unconditionally.

Danielle Rothschild  
(Sophomore)



Yes, I believe you can still be a faithful follower without attending services at your place of worship. You don't need to go to a service to believe in God or whomever you choose to believe in. You can pray at home or just believe in whatever you choose to believe.



## Profile: Campus Ministry Finds Faith on Campus



By Catherine Muldoon

In today's power-hungry, greed-driven society, it is hard to find and accept faith. We are a people obsessed with bigger, better, more expensive trends that rule our lives, and we lose track of the things that are actually important like love, family, and friends. St. Joseph's College works to keep students in touch with the idea of faith; no matter what religion they choose to believe. Religion can be controversial, but faith is universal. Faith is the devotion and loyalty to one's beliefs. Everyone believes in something, and Campus Ministry at St. Joseph's works with students to uphold and increase the strength of their faith.

Within Campus Ministry, there are two entities. There is the Office of Campus Ministry, which is part of Student Life, and there is the Campus Ministry and Outreach Club, which is a student organization. According to the SJC website, "The Office of Campus Ministry of St. Joseph's College instills integrity, service, social responsibility, and intellectual and spiritual values into the College community." These ideals are ones which every individual should strive to uphold to not only better him or herself, but to also keep a student grounded. They remind us that we are only human, and that we should value our time on earth.

Although St. Joseph's College holds a strong Catholic Tradition as a Sisters of Saint Joseph school, the Office of Campus Ministry serves the entire SJC population. Sr. Susan Wilcox, the director of Campus Ministry says, "We embrace the word Catholic in its meaning as universal to serve diverse faith traditions and spiritual beliefs." She adds, "The vast majority of our students value their spirituality; they just want to define it in their own way." The Office of Campus Ministry offers student a variety of outlets to express their own faith. They offer Catholic liturgies twice weekly and Zen Meditation once a week. During the spring semester the office sponsors "Lunch in the Park" during common hour in Fort Greene Park as a chance to experience nature. The Office also held an overnight retreat on campus from November 19-20 with the theme "The Community Within: Seeing Yourself for Who You Are."

The Campus Ministry and Outreach Club is also busy with events on campus to promote faith. They co-sponsored with Choral Society, the Thanksgiving "Breads of the World" on Nov. 24. They are also co-sponsored with Child Study Club the Holiday Giving Tree Project, which gathers gifts for mothers and children in local homeless shelters.

Campus Ministry, both the office and the club, work tirelessly in the St. Joseph's community to promote the idea of celebrating your own faith for the betterment of self and society. Under the direction of Sr. Susan, they are a longstanding organization with enough determination and heart for the entire college community.

## To Wii or Not to Wii: SJC Edition

Students wind down with a Science Club-sponsored Wii tournament.

By Cassandra Guerrier

With the month of November comes the sneaky arrival of arduous midterms, time consuming papers, and stress in general. In the eyes of many these midterms (sometimes a synonym for war) leave a trail of desperation and sorrow in their aftermath. In order to combat these effects, the Science Club held a Wii tournament on November 04 in the student lounge at SJC. Athletes and students alike came together to wind down.

Immediately upon arrival, I was greeted with warm smiles and a welcoming environment as I sought out Stephanie Thermoizier, President of the Science Club. We sat down to speak about how the simplicity of something like playing games can be a stress combatant. According to Thermoizier '13, the idea behind the Wii tournament was to find a way to inte-

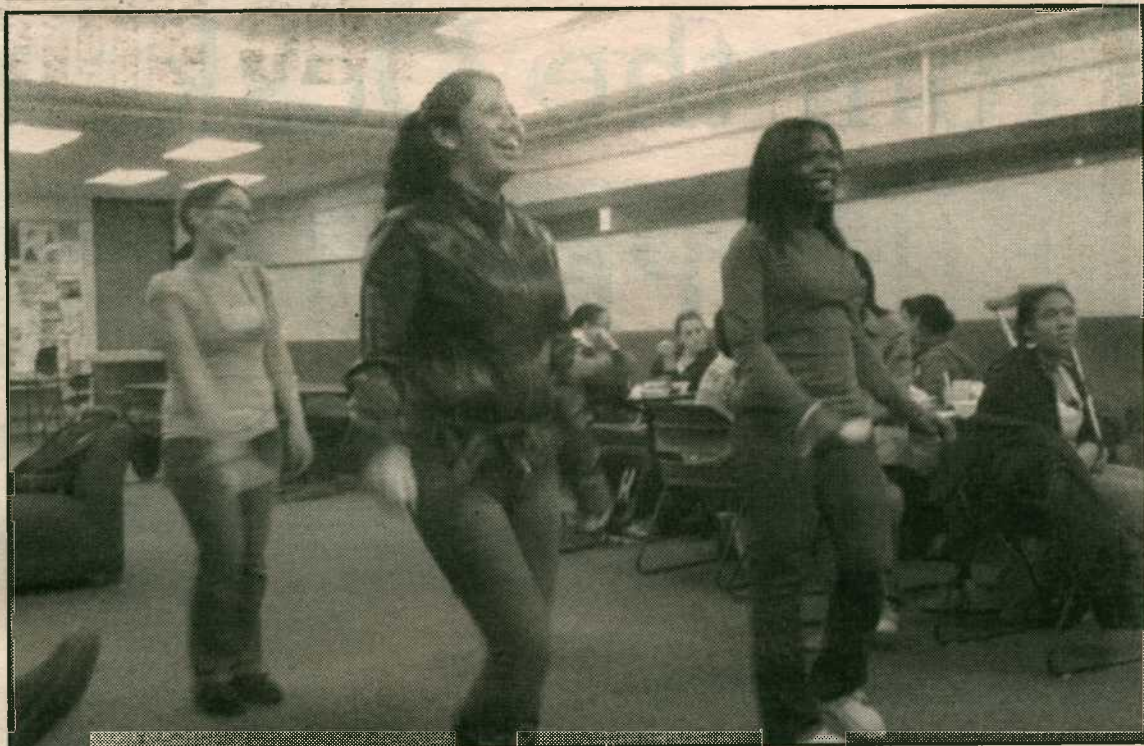


Photo Credit: Cassandra Guerrier

Students At Play: The Wii Tournament is on!

grate the pleasurable aspects of science into its more academic side. "When most people think of science, they think of cells, biology. With this event, we hope to show broader, different categories of science. Not only are people having fun here, but they might be considering [learning about] technology. And that's our main goal," said Stephanie. The turnout to this event was very positive; a substantial amount of students came down to the Red Room to enjoy

an hour and a half of fun, putting their worry over homework aside.

They were also motivated by the amount of food and wide range of prizes available. "[There are] four \$25 gift cards to Amazon. Four departments were nice enough to put little gift bags together for us. I'd like to give a big thank you to Admissions, Athletics, Alumni, and Off-Campus Housing and everyone who made this event a huge success," Stephanie said.

It was obvious that a lot of

thought went into setting up this event. The Science Club had to keep the students' interests in mind. There were stations set up for each game being played, ranging from Super Smash Bros. Brawl and Mario Kart to Just Dance 2. Classmates who never spoke to each other either joined together or competed against one another all for the sake of entertainment. After 6:30 p.m. rolled by, and students and club members began to recuperate and clean up before heading off, one thing was clear: despite the Wiis being taken down, and the games put away, the presence of the unity experienced was left behind in the atmosphere.

"With this event, we hope to show broader, different categories of science."

Stephanie Thermoizier, Science Club President

## Superstitions: Foolhardy or Foolproof?

By Lisa Murphy

"Don't step on a crack or you'll break your mother's back."

"It's bad luck to open an umbrella indoors".

"You get 7 years of bad luck if you break a mirror."

"If you step in dog poop, it's good luck."

"It's bad luck for the groom to see the bride in her dress before the wedding."

Oh, superstitions. If you're reading this, I'm sure you have heard of at least one of these seemingly idiotic phrases. There's probably a good chance that you even believe one of them. I do. Why? What's the reasoning behind believing in something that is based upon no reason at all?

A superstition, by definition, is "a belief or notion, not based on reason or knowledge, in or of the ominous significance of a particular thing, circumstance, occurrence, proceeding, or the like." As we are all college students, it is safe to say that we are not without knowledge. Then why do we often choose to put our knowledge aside and put our trust in these reasonless beliefs?

Many superstitions are passed throughout families from generation to generation. For example, I was told not to wear pearls or give pearls as a gift because "pearls bring tears". I do not know the reasoning behind this belief but this superstition was

passed from my great grandmother to my grandmother to my mother, who then passed it on to me. It's ironic that I choose to abide by this superstition even though I have no understanding of its origin. All I know is that if I don't want to cause myself any upsets, I better not wear pearls.

I also learned from my family that you cannot walk into your house after leaving a wake or a funeral. You have to stop somewhere first or else you are "bringing death" into your house. So before I come home from one of these events, I have to make sure I either stop and get bite to eat or stop into a store to, as I like to put it, "shake off the death vibes". I know, you're thinking, "she's crazy," but here's a little story for you that might make you believe in this one: A couple of years ago, I was on my way home from a wake and stopped at a corner store in my neighborhood to "shake off the death vibes". Two days after that, I saw a picture of that store in the newspapers and on television with a report saying that someone came into the

store and shot and killed one of the owners. I was shocked when I heard this. To be honest, as crazy as it sounds, I sort of felt guilty about it. It really made me think that maybe this silly superstition is actually true and that the "death" that I "shook off" of me in that store was the reason for this tragedy.

I believe that people create and follow superstitions to gain a sense of control in their life. People want to be able to control everything that happens to them. They want to be able to determine their own fate. In reality, though, we cannot control everything. We cannot control the actions of others and their actions can both purposely and inadvertently affect what happens to us. As much as we feel we are in control, something unexpected can always occur.

But superstitions can have an effect on one's life. As the poet James Allen once said, "The outer conditions of a person's life will always be found to reflect their inner beliefs". The kind of energy that you exude from yourself does, in fact, play a role in what happens in your

life. So if you break a mirror and believe that you are going to have seven years of bad luck, you will exist with a negative energy around you and it will truly seem as if you are doomed for seven years. If you believe that you will have good luck from stepping in a pile of dog poop, it will seem as though you are having good luck because of the positive energy that you are emanating. So, as irrational as it sounds, there can be a benefit to believing in superstitions. All one must do is believe wisely.

For your enjoyment, here are some other superstitions heard around campus:

"My brother can't put any hats or shoes on the bed. And if they happen to wind up on the bed, he has to tap them on the floor three times before wearing them" ~ Brigid Shaw (Freshman)

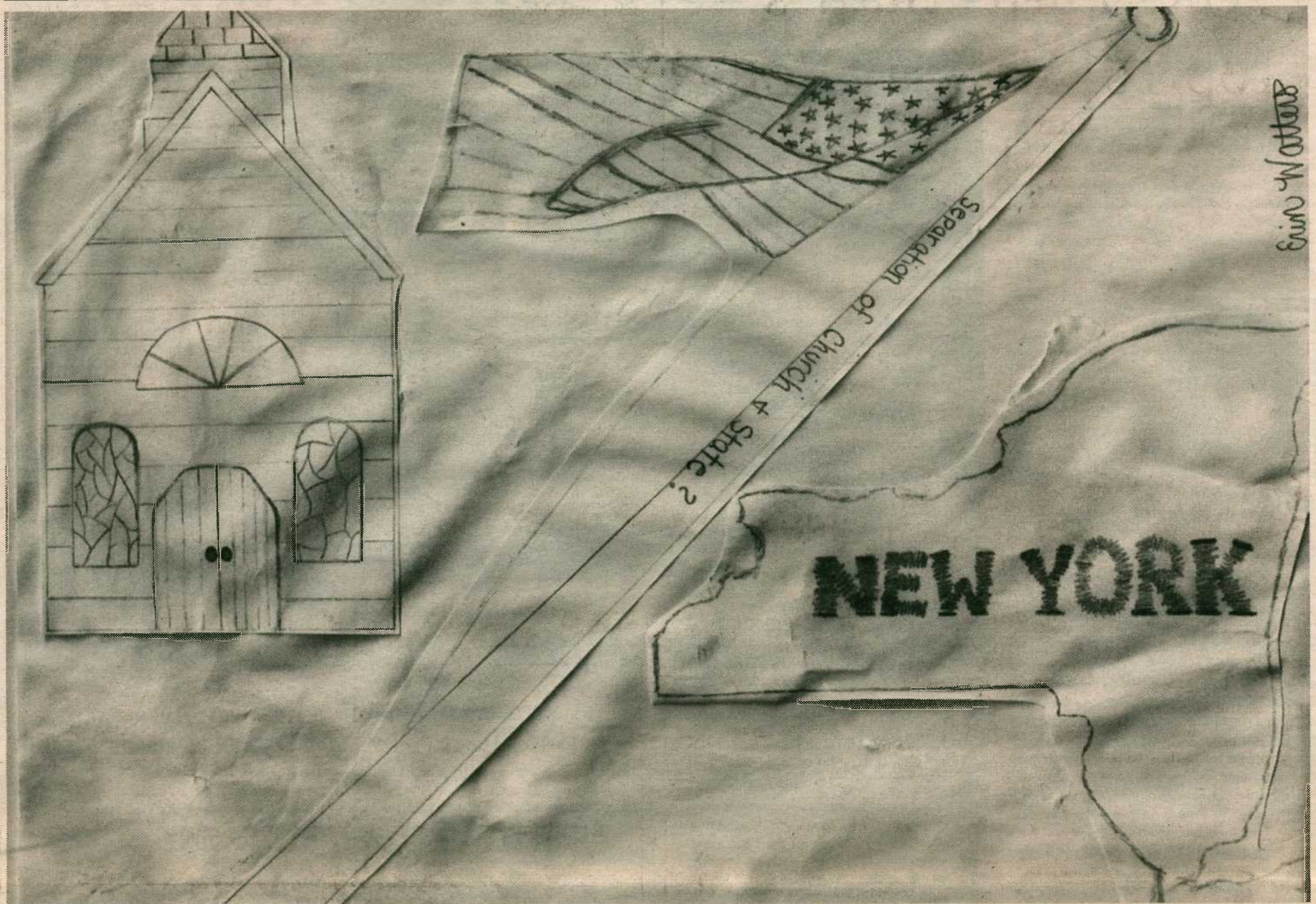
"My family believes that when moving into a new house, you have to enter the house carrying a loaf of bread and a new broom. You have to pour salt on the floor so your life always has seasoning and use the broom to sweep away the evil spirits." ~ Nicole Casanova (Sophomore)

"My grandfather says that he won't enter through a doorway when there is a 7 in the time because it's bad luck." ~ Teresa Napoli (Junior)

## What's the reasoning behind believing in something that is based upon no reason at all?



# Politics & Society



Cartoon by Erin Watters

## Why YOU Need to Care About Politics

By Robin Darville

Not long ago I presented a speech in class about different political ideologies in the United States. After giving my speech, my professor called on my classmates to critique my speech. The responses were similar: they basically said that they were not interested in my speech at all because it involved politics. I wasn't shocked because this is how most students feel about politics.

How can we have a government for the people and by the people if some of the people

don't even care about politics? Politics are used to gain power in the government to carry on with agendas. The way some politicians gain power is by campaigning and winning elections. We vote for which politicians meet our needs, or society's needs.

For example, according to Article I Section 2 of the Constitution, "the House of Representatives shall be composed of members chosen every 2nd year by the people of the several states." If you were to say you don't care about politics, then you don't care about who is currently in or will be in the House of Representatives. What kinds of people are representing us in office? Are they good people who care

about what is best for society or are they people who are in office for self-interested reasons? If people who don't care about us are representing us then we must join together and get those people out of office with our vote.

When you don't care about politics you don't know what is going on in your country. We could wake up one day not living in a free country anymore because we didn't care about who is in office or what that person stands for. We should all educate ourselves about politics and our government because it affects our everyday lives from public transportation to scholarships and so much more. We should all take advantage of voting because it helps us

decide our own future. If you don't care about what happens to our country then you don't care about what happens to you or your friends and family.

College students should care about politics because many college students take out loans expecting to pay them back after graduating and getting a job. Jobs are scarce and this could be a setback when it comes to paying back the loans. This could even lead to debt. Students should care about politics because politics are how we can voice our opinions about what we care about. Voting is one way we can change what happens in the future.

## Just How Separate ARE Church and State, Anyway?

By Mike Panico

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness."

If those words look familiar to you, you probably have some knowledge in regards to the Declaration of Independence.

When we talk about the issue of religion in this country, the words "separation of church and state" come up quite a bit. No one seems to be able to come up with an answer to if there is actually separation of church and state in our country. Some say that we all have the freedom to do what we want, and the government cannot tell us what religion to worship, and therefore it is totally separate from religion. Others believe that there are elements of religion

in our Constitution and government.

So, how do we find an answer to this? Well, let's do something that the Founding Fathers wanted us to do in the first place: look back into history, especially the Constitution.

First of all, America was founded because of religious persecution. The original colonists came over from Europe because they were being persecuted for their beliefs. So, essentially America was formed in order to give people a chance to freely express whatever religious beliefs they chose to express.

Of course, when coming up with a Declaration of Independence, the Founding Fathers clearly knew that religion and God played a huge role in the lives of the colonists. The signers of the Declaration were Congregationalist, Presbyterian, Anglican, Unitarian, and Roman Catholic. Some were Deist, but only a few. (There are those who like to label all of our Founding Fathers Deists, suggesting that Judeo-Christian principles had nothing to do with this nation's founding.) These men were all highly

educated as well, so they understood what religion and morality meant. They knew why this country was founded.

This idea of Natural Law, that we all have rights given to us by God or our Creator, is sometimes thought of as being a form of theocracy. That is totally wrong. Go to the beginning and read the excerpt from the Declaration. There is no specific God or Creator that is being referenced. So, in effect, this "God" or "Creator" can be from any religion, and the Founders knew exactly what they were doing when they put that in. An English teacher I had once told me: "Everything in a story is there for a reason, not by chance." The Founding Fathers had a specific intent, and they expressed that very clearly.

Now, to the Constitution! Here, once again, there are many misconceptions on how the Founding Fathers wanted things. When the First Amendment reads, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof..." there is clearly the intent only to prevent the government from forming a theocracy.

The Founding Fathers knew for a fact that a theocracy would be destructive to liberty.

Read the Constitution. Read all our laws. The words "separation of church and state" are NOWHERE to be found. We have Judeo-Christian elements in our Declaration, as I have pointed out. We cannot flip flop when we talk about our Constitution and religion. It is all right for this insensitive mosque to be built, but it is not alright for someone to pray the Holy Rosary outside of a Planned Parenthood? Someone did that in August. Guess what happened? He was arrested. Even though the charges were eventually dropped, the fact of the matter is this person was arrested. He was arrested and his freedom of religion was violated, but of course, we cannot prevent Muslims, possibly extremists, to build a mosque in an insensitive place. The combination of political correctness and the inaccurate teachings of the Founding Fathers in general have led to this misconception of religion and the Constitution.



# Harry Potter: The End of an Era

By Mike Panico

The year was 1998. I was 8 years old. I was going through a time where all I wanted to do was either play Nintendo 64 or basketball in the backyard. Reading was the last thing on my mind. One day my Aunt came to my house with a book. She told me that she had read about it, and how it would be the next "big thing." What was the book? What else? "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone."



So, I read it. I enjoyed it, but I still was the typical 8-year-old, reading a chapter, then going and playing video games for a "short" break that would last a few hours. But I got the book done, and did a report on it for my 3rd grade class. I had no idea what would come.

**Mike Panico**

The following December I got books 2 and 3 as gifts, and that is when I really fell in love with the books. After Book 3 came out, "Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban", it seemed like Harry Potter was getting BIG. There was a huge demand for "The Goblet of Fire" and you bet I made my mother pre-order it. That one, which is 734 pages, I read in 2 weeks. I remember sitting in my room all day and night reading. When "Order of the Phoenix" came out, I refused to go to my friend's house so I could stay home and read. When "Half Blood Prince" came out, I took it to work. As much as I needed the restaurant to be busy, I would pray for a dead night so I could do nothing but read.

Then came "Deathly Hallows." Of course with my luck, I would be away on a service trip to Mexico with my high school when it came out! I remember the travel day back, being in the San Diego Airport with all my friends buying it. I had ordered my mother to have the book on my desk waiting for me (and you bet it was). I was dying not being able to read it.

Usually you can remember details from very important events in your life, or even traumatic ones. I can remember every aspect of the Harry Potter series, and where I was while reading them. Why? Because they were my childhood. The Harry Potter phenomenon has become so big that it has become part of me, and part of many people my age.



Photo Credit: Mallory Arroyo

Hogwarts students Javier and Teresa Bosque, Christian Branch, and Defense Against the Dark Arts Professor Erin Dorso line up to see "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1".

We grew up with these books. By the time the movies came out, Harry, Ron, and Hermione were the same age as us. I would always see the movies the first weekend; it became a semi-tradition that my best friend and I would go see every movie, even though I would have to explain everything to him. I'm one of those "one thing is left out from the novel, I hate the movie" types of people. But it was great to see the books right before my eyes. My first day at St. Joseph's I had a very extensive conversation with senior Christian Branch. What was it about? Harry Potter, and how I wasn't much a fan of the films.

When has a book series affected people like this one? No one saw how this was going to become a cultural phenomenon. Every time a book came out, there would be Harry Potter costume parties

at different bookstores as well as the ridiculous lines waiting for the stores to open. The great demand for the books prompted "The New York Times" to create a list of best selling children's books in 2000. As many as 400 million copies of Harry Potter books have been sold worldwide, and they have been translated into 67 different languages, even Ancient Greek. The last four books have been recorded as the four fastest selling books in history. With action figures, costumes, the movies, and books, the Harry Potter brand is worth 24 billion dollars. Harry Potter has become so big that Universal Studios in Florida even added a Harry Potter portion to their Islands of Adventure Theme Park. (And might I add, the ButterBeer was AMAZING.)

I recently re-read all 7 books. It took me about

two weeks to do so. You start to catch and appreciate things that you didn't before, especially if you were young when you first read them. You appreciate watching Harry go through a time in which he was confused about what was going on around him, wondering why all of this was happening to him, just as any teenager would. As I see the Harry Potter film franchise, and ultimately the entire franchise, come to a close, it is very bittersweet. I will always remember counting down the days until I was able to keep reading, and when the final movies would come. But, like my childhood, it all has to come to an end, and whenever I think about those wonderful worry-free years, this phenomenon will always be a huge part of that life.

## Review: The Dance Club presents "Shifting Generations"

By Diana Kessel

If you ask around campus which club can put on an entertaining show, the response you get is unanimous: there's no doubt that the Dance Club always offers one of the highlights of the semester. On Thursday, November 18 at Common Hour, the

Dance Club debuted their fall show, "Shifting Generations," which was a comment on the departure of many important members who graduated this past spring, and the newcomers who are sure to make an impact.

As usual, the show featured a variety of dance styles, including Salsa, Latin, Irish, Indian, and Hip-Hop, among others. There were a total of

43 dancers in the club's show, who were all headed by co-presidents Sina Surace and Patricia Garcia, and of course by club moderator Stacey Temple. Anyone who as ever taken the stage will not hesitate to tell you that energy is vital in order to ensure a successful performance. Energy was certainly present in the auditorium for "Shifting Generations", as the audience was screaming and enthusiastic the entire time, showing support to students such as Kourtney Cymone-Charles, who danced a gorgeous solo to "Good Man." Her flexibility and skill was a fabulous example of the talent she has honed through a great deal of training and experience.

There was no shortage of talent or excitement from new members either. Jeremy Lardieri, who is a frequent guest choreographer, took advantage of the energy of many new members in his hip-hop piece "Dynamite," sung by Taio Cruz.

In an interesting change of pace, the Dance Club showcased a culture

There were a total of 43 dancers in the club's show, who were all headed by co-presidents Sina Surace and Patricia Garcia, and of course by club moderator Stacey Temple.

gaining notoriety at SJC- the Irish dancers. "Celtic Quatro" was choreographed by senior Lisa Murphy, and danced by Catherine Muldoon, Lisa Murphy, Danielle Rothschild, and Brigid Shaw. The movement was unbelievable as all four girls were perfectly in sync, dancing a technique that takes years of practice.

"Shifting Generations" was absolutely a successful show that can only leave us waiting until the spring show to see some more of the incredible dance talent present among the students at SJC.



Photo Credit: Daniella Giordano

Members of the Dance Club perform in their fall semester show, "Shifting Generations".



## The Cloisters: Manhattan's Sanctuary of Medieval Art and Architecture

By Gabrielle Hughes

Located in the Fort Tyron Park area of Manhattan, The Cloisters is a branch of New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art. It is a conglomeration of five French cloistered abbeys, brought to New York and reassembled in the 1930s. During medieval times, cloisters were places of religious seclusion, often used by monks for meditation or studying. Upon arriving at the museum, you will feel as though you've been transported to another place and time.

The setting and construction of The Cloisters is unlike any other art museum in Manhattan. Contrasting with the congested arrangement of skyscrapers in the city, The Cloisters sit on a hilltop and overlooks the Hudson River. The four-acre spread is heavily landscaped, furthering the beauty of the museum's castle-like structure. Additionally, the cloistered courtyards comprise gardens of various plants, stained-glass windows cast stunning light displays at specific times of day, and the museum's west terrace offers the perfect spot to observe the surrounding environment.

Inside, the museum houses European art crafted during the medieval period. Over five thousand works of art can be found at The Cloisters, with pieces dating from the twelfth to fifteenth centuries. Among the collections on display are illuminated manuscripts, religious sculptures, paintings, frescoes, and metalwork. The Unicorn Tapestries are perhaps the most popular exhibit at the museum, seven of which hang inside the gallery.

Along with the permanent collections, The Cloisters frequently has special events and programs. Gallery talks occur on a weekly basis, bringing in guest speakers to discuss topics associated with the museum. There are also family workshops, holiday concerts, and other seasonal activities. Check the museum's program calendar to stay informed on upcoming events.

When planning a trip to the Cloisters, keep in mind the location. In proximity to the SJC campus, getting to the museum can take over an hour. Parking is available on site, and the museum is also accessible via public transit. Adult admission is a bit pricey at \$20 per ticket, but if you have your student ID, you can gain entry for only \$10.

Although it was constructed within the last century, The Cloisters is an excellent venue for immersing into the medieval era. The extraordinary works of art, as well as the architectural structures in which they are contained, offer visitors insight to the past. The hike up to the museum may be lengthy, but experiencing The Cloisters first hand is worth the commute.

For more information visit: <http://www.metmuseum.org/cloisters/>



Photo Credit: Robert Napolitano

Hapless florist Seymour (Daniel Velez) and his wish-granting carnivorous plant Audrey II (Christian Branch and Mike LaGuidice.)

## Review: Chapel Players presents "Little Shop of Horrors"

By Cassandra Guerrier

On Saturday, November 06, 2010, every seat in Tuohy auditorium was filled in anticipation of the play "Little Shop of Horrors". Presented by the St. Joseph's College Chapel Players Dramatic Society, the cast of talented actors and singers were more than just an acquired taste; it was more than just a group of college students fulfilling a hobby.

As the musical commences, the first sounds we are greeted with are the voices of the "Urchins": Crystal, Ronette, and Chiffon, played by Andriana Dillard, Sabrina Cornia, and Zuri Terrell, respectively. This chorus of three harmonized well. They each brought a strong voice, great acting, and attitude to the table.

The story of the meek character Seymour Krelborn, played by Daniel Velez, is something most of us can relate to; he's a hard-working man who lives day to day, trying to get by living in a horrible neighborhood. Daniel Velez sells us this character's story with his soft voice and striking determination. In addition, Audrey, played by Aliza Hernandez, is all hushed tones and a quirky personality. The portrayal of these main characters was dead-on. The chemistry between the two of them, with the full support of not only the cast but the backing orchestra as well, shone through; the fact that each actor/actress would add depth to the story of a carnivorous plant was clear.

Christian L. Branch, the voice behind the carnivorous plant that grants Seymour's wildest dreams (but at a horrific price), 'came equipped' with a soulful, booming voice. From the moment his character was introduced, it was clear that he would propel the plant into becoming the star of the show. However, the on-point characterization of the plant was not solely created by Branch; Michael LaGuidice was the puppeteer. His manipulation of this character's

limbs went along nicely with Christian's voice. Also, the humorous disposition of Diana Kessel, who played a wide range of characters, Sean Dorso, who played flower shop owner Mr. Mushnik, and Justin Burke, who played Dr. Orin Scrivello D.D.S., didn't hurt. All three actors provided comic relief to the main story with their witty lines and amusing songs.

Both the orchestration and lighting in this piece did an excellent job in serving as the background and describing each character's emotions without having to use words. There were a variety of instruments used, ranging from keyboards, trumpets, and reeds to drums, bass, guitar, and percussion, all brought together by Musical Director Scott Battaglia. In addition, the visuals, highlighted by Assistant Director Adam Mace's luminous lighting, included a wide array of bright colors choreography. The dancing done by the actors/actresses was very sharp and well thought out by choreographer Jaime Vacca-Hoefner.

It's also of note that some of the proceeds stemming from the four-day performance were generously donated to Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS; this organization works hard to raise awareness of AIDS and encourages those who are diagnosed to continue living their lives as they should, through doing something they love.

To conclude, every element used in this musical, from the comedic and stunning cast to the band of accomplished and determined musicians, blended together to create a winning atmosphere. The level of acting in this musical was incredibly advanced for a group of 'amateur' actors. The greatest moment of their acting, however, came at the end of the story when each character sang with melancholy in their voices the four words we should all remember: "Don't feed the plants."

## Back to Basics: Talent in Fashion

By Cassandra Guerrier

On December 2nd, 2010, the upbeat sounds of music flared out of the speakers in the Tuohy auditorium and the scene was full of lively, boisterous people. Every seat around the runway was taken; as this semester comes to a close, students needed a reason to step away from their final exam study guides to a place where they could all come together and enjoy a common interest: Fashion.

With the theme "Back to Basics" in mind, Fashion Club members set out to organize a show, that incorporated basic clothing that mostly everyone already has in their closets: Jeans, leggings, t-shirts, blazers, skirts, button-down shirts, etc. The only difference between what is in our closets and what was on stage that night was that each piece showcased was put together by a group of talented SJC students. Each club member was a part of the creative process put into planning the event. With a winning smile on her face, fashion club model Sophia Bellegarde '14 stated, "It was a really good experience. I actually got to be a part of something I would not normally do. So yeah; it was fun."

The turnout to the show was quite impressive; there was no seat left empty throughout the auditorium and the food provided ran out long before the show started. The audience seemed to be really into the runway show, clapping enthusiastically as the models came out onto the stage and rooting everyone on with equal fervor. "This year's fashion show was fun. It was a new and unexpected twist on the basic attire we wear in everyday life. It was nice to see a fresh spin on these trends one might think of as boring or mundane. The music was good, and I thought the dance contest was entertaining. All the female models looked beautiful, and the male models were very handsome. I looked forward to the Spring semester [show]," said Kayla Johnson '13.

The biggest twist to the show occurred when the models came out in clothing made from everyday household items; this ranged from garbage bag dresses to bubble wrap skirts. Kiara Robinson '13 said, "I liked the creativity of all the different outfits and how it was mixed with elements of everyday wear." Furthermore, after showing a presentation between breaks that allowed the audience to see how hard everyone worked and how much fun they had doing it, it was clear that the amount of sweat, blood, and passion put into this show was nothing compared to the feeling of satisfaction and pride they got at the end result. Chris Townes '14 stated with a laugh, "Personally, I like to look good so it was a great experience."

The talent of the members of Fashion Club was successfully portrayed on the runway. This event provided an exciting way to welcome the end of classes and it allowed the students a day away from worrying about upcoming finals. With the winter vacation a few weeks away, the show was a necessary break from all the everyday stress in the classroom.



# Soccer Gets a Shot at SJC

By Cynthia Giersberg

For the first time ever, St. Joseph's College rallied together a coed soccer club, which competed in two games this fall semester against Yeshiva University and Vaughn College. This year's SJC soccer team consisted of five women and twelve men, all of who collectively worked as a team for the St. Joseph's College Brooklyn campus.

The team practiced long and hard for months, mastering footwork and techniques. Practices were usually held Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday and on some occasions, Saturday morning. The team worked for about two and a half hours long each practice with Coach Maciej Siekierski preaching communication as key to having a well-developed team. "I think there is no greater feeling as a coach than watching your team take the field and give it their all," said Coach Siekierski. "You can be a fan of professional or collegiate sports, but the connection one has coaching a team is unlike any other. Your team comes first."

The very first game was held on a frigid fall night, November 7, 2010 at 8pm in Yonkers, against the very competitive Yeshiva University. It was Yeshiva's senior night so they came well prepared to challenge and win the match against SJC. The game ended in a 9-0 win for Yeshiva. Although there were no scores for SJC that night, goalie Matthew Walsh blocked some impressive goals that Yeshiva almost had on St. Joseph's. "Being the goalie was a great experience. Took a lot of work since I was the only person willing to do the work in the net," explains senior, Matthew Walsh. "Being goalie was a great time for me because I love being in the center of all the plays."

St. Joseph's College next soccer game took place on Sunday, November 14, 2010 at 12pm against Vaughn College. Although the game ended in another loss of 6-2 for St. Joseph's it was an intense game and a



Photo Credit: Anthony Macapugay

The 2010 St. Joseph's College soccer team.

good fight that included the first two goals in the history of SJC soccer. Senior Mike Modugno scored the first goal of the game. The second goal was a team effort as Derrick Akwei made a run with the ball down the field, making a smooth assist off to forward Omar Al-dulimi who successfully kicked it into the goal. "I was really excited that I was able to score a goal in my first year with the SJC soccer team," said Al-dulimi. "Even though we were losing at the time I scored the goal, I was really

happy because it was a big accomplishment for the team and myself." Coach Siekierski said of the game, "I think I will forever remember our first ever home soccer match. (There was) a lot of support from other student athletes, parents, and administrators, along with the team showing tremendous heart and effort. That day will always have a special place in my heart."

The SJC soccer team showed heart and fight in two unforgettable and historical games for the college, leav-

ing them all with long lasting memories and good friendships. SJC sophomore Jessica Gargano said, "This truly was an amazing experience. We all started at different levels, new positions, some of us never even played before, but we worked hard as a team and played with all our heart. We were all different, but shared one passion, to play soccer... We not only became a team, but a SJC Soccer family. After the few months we spent together working as a team, we showed everything we had in our

games."

The soccer season wouldn't have been possible if it weren't for the encouragement and faith that Coach Siekierski and Athletic Director Frank Carbone brought with them to each game and practice; they are the ones who made the soccer club possible. Hopefully there will be varsity men and women teams for next year if all goes well.

## St. Joe's Gets Ready to Join the NCAA

By Kristin McMaster

Athletics is a major part of any college or university. It is the pinnacle of school spirit and excitement on and off campus. Winning a championship and having that oversized trophy displayed in the hall is definitely a reason to gloat but it's even better if that championship title is from the NCAA. The National Collegiate Athletic Association's purpose is to "govern competition in a fair, safe, equitable and sportsmanlike manner, and to integrate intercollegiate athletics into higher education so that the educational experience of the student-athlete is paramount."

St. Joseph's College has always had the mindset for innovation and expansion. They are always looking for bigger and better things, and the NCAA is exactly what athletic director Frank Carbone had in mind five years ago. In 2005 Carbone wanted to have St. Joseph's College

"Division III is extremely popular with over 450 members and the chances of acceptance were slim, but while other colleges were turned away SJC was granted Exploratory Status."

become a member of the NCAA Division III, but membership wasn't easy. The challenge of membership seemed daunting, but SJC remained hopeful. NCAA guidelines required a lot from the college. They needed new sports, a new facility, more staff, and other resources. Sr. Elizabeth and Frank Carbone went all the way to Indianapolis, to the headquarters of the NCAA, to learn about the process. Division III is extremely popular with over 450 members and the chances of acceptance were

slim, but while other colleges were turned away SJC was granted Exploratory Status. This meant the college would be considered.

In 2007 SJC moved to Provisional Status. With Provisional Status acquired, the Athletics Department also acquired a whole new set of rules. First the school needed at least five men's and five women's teams. Each team needed to play a certain number of times, and play against four-year schools in all ten sports. At the moment SJC only had men's and women's basketball, cross country, and tennis, and then soon added men's volleyball. SJC needed more teams and more staff, so in 2007 SJC welcomed Anthony Macapugay as sports information director. In the second year of provisional status, SJC had everything in order in terms of paperwork and stats. Next was to work on the required facility. Currently some teams call Brooklyn Technical High School home, but starting in



Photo Credit: Lisa Murphy

Athletic Director Frank Carbone and NCAA Compliance Coordinator Maciej Siekierski head up the college's NCAA effort.

the Fall of 2012, the new home to some teams will become across the street from the current gym.

Now in Fall 2010 there is only one year left to achieve NCAA Division III status. September 1, 2010 marked the last year that will lead to a new beginning. The Fall of 2011 will be the first official year for the college as a full, active member of the NCAA. Entering the final year, SJC Athletics has eleven intercollegiate sports, which are men's and women's basketball, volleyball, cross country and ten-

nis, as well as women's swimming, baseball and softball. It also fields four club teams: soccer, golf, dance and step. The college currently has more than 150 athletes, which is about 19% of the entire student body.

So in less than 365 days SJC will be recognized by a foundation so well known that it will put the college on yet another map. Now in the homestretch, the school eagerly awaits the acknowledgment of NCAA membership; a title they truly deserve.



# The Spirit

## Special Holiday Insert

245 Clinton Ave.

Special Holiday Insert!

Special Holiday Insert!

### 'Twas the Night Before Black Friday...

By Roseangela Fracchiolla

It is four in the morning on black Friday and I am lined up outside of Best Buy on a long line waiting to go inside and get the best deal on a flat screen television. The office manager comes outside and starts to give wristbands to all of the prospective customers. Suddenly, I felt like a sweepstakes winner: "Maybe there's a surprise celebrity," I said to my mother. We soon came to find out that there was, in fact, no celebrity, just door busting sales that could potentially create such mayhem that wristbands were a way to keep us all in line. Why not attach a numbered ticket to our ears? After all, we fervent Black Friday shoppers are essentially the only chance for stores not to starve to death in today's economic climate. The doors open and bedlam awaits...

Okay, so this didn't actually happen to me, as due to the fact that at four in the morning on black Friday I was sound asleep, still high off of the tryptophan overload from the night before. Yet, this did happen to many individuals across the country waiting in line for the holiday's best deals. A New York Times article documented the progress of sales this year's Black Friday and comments that "they saw a surge in traffic at stores and malls over last year." Somehow this is not surprising considering that retailers are slashing prices so ferociously that the consumer's wallet has remained perpetually opened this holiday season. However, what is most alarming about this black Friday madness is the fact that much of the shopping being done was not really for friends and loved ones: "we're noticing that shoppers snapped up discretionary items for themselves rather than necessities or gifts; Americans are shopping selfishly again."

The word "again" implies that this selfishness on the part of the American consumers was dormant for a period of time, yet it seems as though this selfishness during the holidays has never really been dormant, despite the economic hardships of the country. The numbers prove that Black Friday success has skyrocketed from last year, but maybe these numbers

are too high to begin with. Yes, this boom in sales does help businesses stay alive and is stimulating the economy, but if I remember correctly from my childhood obsessions with the holidays, wasn't it about Yuletide cheer rather than door busters and one-day sales? Jillian Cianflone, a sophomore at St. Joseph's, shares her ideas about the holidays: "When I was younger, the holidays were all about Santa coming and bringing presents, spending time with my family... now there is competition even in the spirit of gift-giving. It is constantly about who has the newest, most in-style thing, (and) the stress really takes away from everything that is important about the holiday season."

"The Spirit" (as is the clever namesake of our school's newspaper) is something that cannot be seen but still is present. Holiday season traditions vary from culture to culture, yet we cannot deny the nostalgia that overwhelms us when that first day of December sneaks up upon us. The last two weeks of the fall semester is stressful for every college student; finals consume us and term papers redefine the term "sleepless night." The one thing that always gets us through with a fierce determination is the holidays being just around the corner. The term "holidays" now is being replaced with "Black Friday" and "Cyber Monday, and that "spirit" of togetherness only occurs when people unite at the checkout counter at our favorite department stores.

Something is off. So many men and women are spending their holidays overseas, not at home with their families, and we are here, on homeland, with the people we love right in front of us, and suddenly we are so quick to be swept up by the craze of shopping centers and online bargains. If I may quote the movie Love Actually: "because it's Christmas, and at Christmas we tell the truth." Let's put down the credit cards, and the wrapping paper, and sit around the dinner table, be thankful for the blessing we are given, maybe give your younger brother that last spoonful of figgy pudding (whatever that is) and enjoy the precious gifts that don't have price tags and never go out of style.



Photo Credit: Robert Napolitano

Members of the SJC Community visit with Santa Clause during "Home for the Holidays", one of the college's popular holiday events.

### A Solider's Christmas

By Robert Jurman

There are things beyond political parties and affiliations. Whatever beliefs we have, our American soldiers are what we can all agree on. As you read this, a soldier is out there in Afghanistan and other parts of the world, risking his or her life for the safety of this great nation and the preservation of our American freedom and way of life. With the Christmas holiday approaching, I think as Americans it is important that we know how our brave soldiers spend their Christmas and what we can do together, to help.

A soldier's Christmas is not like one here stateside. In many cases, soldiers go about their Christmas Day as any other typical day in the field: perhaps a patrol, and the occasional firefight with enemy combatants who use brutal guerilla war tactics to harm our brave men and women in uniform. If a soldier is lucky enough to be on base that day, or return

to base, he or she will usually find an assortment of holiday pies and some classic holiday dishes. In barracks, the soldiers will spend some time together. "We kind of get a little bit of holiday spirit with our tree and get to listen to some Christmas carols on the radio every now and then, but it's definitely different," PFC Christopher Kendall told ABC's "Good Morning America" recently. The soldiers have some packages from home, maybe some fudge or cookies, but that's all.

Still, through these hardships they never falter. They understand why they are there and that they are fighting for something bigger than all of us, something great and magnificent, something that is the most inspired and successful form of Government that the history of man has ever seen, the United States of America. These soldiers do not ask for honors or awards, they simply are satisfied by the thought that they served their country. It is this spirit of Patriotism that drives the soldier through hard times and

through the Holidays, along with thoughts of home and their families.

We owe these brave men and woman a great Christmas. So you may ask yourself, how can I help a soldier in need during the Christmas Holiday? For one thing, you can write out a Christmas card and send it to a soldier\*. Nothing would brighten a soldier's Christmas more than a card from a citizen he or she is fighting for, letting them know their country supports them. You can also send a care package to troops overseas\*. With your help we can make a soldier's Christmas that much more special. Let's unite as Americans, not as Republicans or Democrats, but as a people behind their soldiers. God Bless Our Soldiers, and have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

For more information on how to donate;

\*Christmas Card: [www.letters-fromhomeprogram.org](http://www.letters-fromhomeprogram.org)

\*Care Package: [www.opgratitude.com](http://www.opgratitude.com)





## Review: Choral Society presents "Music From the Heart"



By Kristen McMaster

This December the St. Joseph's Choral Society took the Touhy Hall stage under the new direction of Mary Gatchell for their fall semester performance entitled "Music from the Heart." Mary is an amazing performer herself as well as a pianist and songwriter. She recently released her album "Saturn Return" back in October. She is a graduate of New York University where she majored in Theory and Composition, and as an oboist she has played at Carnegie Hall with the New York Youth Symphony Orchestra, and is presently a member of the Musica Bella Orchestra in NYC. In 2006, she conducted and premiered her first orchestral composition entitled Brezza Senese. She has also written many works for chamber ensembles and choir. Mary is the co-founder and Artistic Director of Siena Summer Music, a chamber music festival in the heart of Tuscany in Siena, Italy. With such an amazing musical background the choral society's concert was in good hands.

Not only was the direction new, but also so was the Executive Board. President Lizzy Fiorella led the chorus in what was a fantastic performance Monday night. After a helping of Chinese food, everyone took their seats, and witnessed the true hard work the chorus has been doing over the past 4 months. The set list, including "Seasons of Love", "This Christmas", and "Beautiful World" (one of Mary's own songs), covered a variety of music from Broadway to holiday classics. The audience was captivated with the harmonious voices of the chorus. The song selections were upbeat and inspirational from beginning to end. Solos were sung by Sean Dorso and Christian Lee Branch; Sean sang "You've Got a Friend in Me" and dedicated it to fellow chorus member and senior, Christian. The crowd loved the dedication and he even had some people crying. The real tears happened when Christian sang his solo "One Moment in Time". Christian said the song summed up everything chorus and St. Joseph's meant to him. The song earned a well-deserved standing ovation, as this was Christian's last concert, since he is graduating after this semester. His presence will surely be missed.

Overall the show was absolutely fantastic. Even though shorter than other concerts in the past, the choral society gave it their all, and proved that they are a group of talented young people. I can't wait to see their concert in the spring; I know it will be equally amazing.

## Profile: The Office of Student Activities

Clubs and Organizations provide enjoyable supplements to the college experience

By Gabrielle Hughes

Feeling unfulfilled with the monotonous routine of your class schedule? Looking to speak to your other interests, outside of academics? The student activities and co-curricular programs found at St. Joseph's can satisfy these inquiries, offering students opportunities to get involved within the school's community.

Located in the Student Life Suite, the Office of Student Activities and Co-Curricular Programs regulates SJC's extracurricular organizations. With numerous events occurring on a weekly basis, the atmosphere is often hectic. Jaime Vacca-Hoefner, the Associate Director of Student Activities & Co-Curricular Programs, is well aware of the excitement that her position entails, stating, "It's not your typical 9-5 job. Every day is different." Jaime has been directly involved with student activities at St. Joseph's for a number of years. In addition to working in the field of student services, Jaime is also a graduate of the college.

Assistant Dean of Students Sherrie



Photo Credit: Lisa Murphy

Michelle Corsetti, Sherrie Van Arnam, and Jaime Vacca-Hoefner make up the Office of Student Activities and Co-Curricular Programs.

Van Arman works with Jaime in the Office of Student Activities, and has been employed by the St. Joseph's community for over thirty years. Sherrie's time at SJC is reflected in her work, adding that there is an element of constant renewal. "Working with students is a privilege. I love the energy, creativity, and newness each student brings."

The incredibly experienced staff overlooking student organizations clearly contributes to the success of SJC clubs, programs, and events. In regards to recent highlights, Sherrie says, "This year's Recreation Fair was a great success, and the Chapel Players production of 'Little Shop of

Horrors' was beyond anything we've ever seen. Every club brings a sense of accomplishment."

In comparison to other colleges, clubs and organizations offered at St.

Joseph's are considerably distinct. Jaime explains that although the SJC population is small, participation and student involvement is exceptional.

Students are exposed to a level playing field, with the ability to participate in anything that sparks interest. Sherrie goes on to describe SJC clubs as "student-centered" because they are formed purely out of student's interests.

Curious as to how a club is formed? The process is simple. Ten partici-

pants that share a common interest fill out an application for a new club. The applicants then go to Senate for preliminary approval. If the request is met, a constitution for the club is created, and an e-board is elected. Finally, the organization goes back to Senate for final approval.

All in all, extracurricular activities and programs enhance the college experience by allowing students to participate in a variety of opportunities. Jaime points out that clubs serve as "learning experiences, in which you can form personal relationships and gain a variety of skills." Although it's possible for students to simply go to class, graduate, and lead successful careers without getting involved, the addition of an extracurricular component can alter college life for the better.

**"Working with students is a privilege. I love the energy, creativity, and newness each student brings."**

**- Sherrie Van Arnam**

## This Holiday Season, You Can Make a Difference

By Jacqueline Wang

The holidays have finally arrived and the chaos and craziness of the season has begun. Every year, people are constantly in a rush, purchasing gifts, determining where we will spend the occasion and, of course, cooking in preparation for it. After the chaos passes and the holiday finally arrives, we calm down a little to enjoy it with our friends and families, and we realize more than ever how important these people are to us and how thankful we are to have them. So this holiday season let's take the time to help those less fortunate than us.

There are several events in New York City during the month of December that anyone can attend in order to help. "Tweet It Forward" is presented by The Best of Social and sponsored by Twtrcon. Twtrcon is focused on the business use of the real-time web. "Tweet It Forward" takes place at the New York Conservatory for Dramatic Arts in Manhattan on Thursday, Dec 16th from 7:00 p.m. to 9 p.m. All donations from the event will benefit the Food Bank for New York City.

Another event to consider attending is Operation Give Back, which is a Toys for Tots

event. This takes place on Saturday December 18th at 4 p.m. - 8 p.m. at the Starrett City Boxing Club in Brooklyn. This event is being sponsored by G-7 Sports, Empowerity Inc., KDuJour Events, and Target; also 3MG Print, Inkwell Lounge, & Nexx Level Entertainment. Every registered child from the ages of 0-12 will receive a gift for Christmas.

The last event I will mention is the Barbour Coat Drive for the Bowery Residents' Committee. This event is already underway and will end on Thursday December 30th. It is located at Barbour, a retail store in Manhattan. Barbour has partnered up with One Warm Coat and is hosting a coat drive to benefit the Bowery Residents' Committee and local community members. For each coat donated, the store will offer 25 percent off the purchase of a new Barbour coat. As of now, the store is accepting any worn coat in

wearable condition. All coats collected will be given to the Bowery Residents' Committee and distributed to local residents. These are just a few events this holiday season where you can lend a helping hand and make a difference.

Moreover, there are several charities that you can donate to during the holiday season. The charity Operation Christmas Child invites anyone to put together a box with small toys, school supplies or any other gifts as well as a note to give to a needy child overseas. The gifts and more importantly, the note will give them a sense of hope. Also, one organization that many have heard of, the Make-a-Wish Foundation gives you the opportunity to make a child's wish come true. Another organization is My Two Front Teeth, which helps to grant the holiday wishes of underprivileged children.

There are even gifts you can

**Therefore, when you're not spending time with family or friends this holiday season, take the time to help a child or individual in need. A simple gesture will mean so much to them.**

buy for family and friends that can give back to charities. A few examples are TOMS brand shoes, CamelBak water bottles and select Pottery Barn candles. Matt Damon and water.org have paired up to create a limited edition CamelBak bottle that starts at \$18.99. All of the profits will help to provide clean drinking water to 1 billion individuals around the world who currently do not have that available to them. Also, when you purchase lidded candle pots (at \$29), 50% will go to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital which helps to aid research for pediatric cancer and other childhood diseases. Lastly, TOMS shoes will match every pair of shoes purchased with a new pair for a child in need.

Therefore, when you're not spending time with family or friends this holiday season, take the time to help a child or individual in need. A simple gesture will mean so much to them. Every action counts, it doesn't have to involve money. Even volunteering in your community can make a huge difference in another's life.



# Can we say "Merry Christmas" anymore?

By Mike Panico

There was a time that we would always say "Merry Christmas" or refer to this time as the "Christmas Season." Nowadays, it seems as though we are pulling away from that as we now have to say "Happy Holidays," even if we have no idea what the party we are telling it to will be celebrating. It seems as though those who say "Merry Christmas" are ridiculed for celebrating their holiday. What is going on?

Of course we should all be sympathetic to everyone's different religious beliefs, but how far do we go? If a person owns a deli, and he is Catholic, and he celebrates Christmas, is it his responsibility to go and put "Happy Holidays" in his window instead of "Merry Christmas?" My issue here is not with other religions, but it is with the fact that this idea of being sensitive to others' cultures and religions only applies to one group. No one gets mad when a Jewish deli has "Happy Chanukah" decorations in their window. This only seems to apply for those who celebrate Christmas.

There are a lot of different reasons for this, and part of it is the push for consumerism in the holiday. If we look at Christmas today, it is all about businesses, and how businesses can make money. Don't get me wrong, I love thriving businesses as much as the next person, but that's all we talk about. What about the religious view of the holiday? Some try to bring awareness to this issue by doing small things such as putting "Keep Christ in Christmas" magnets on their cars. But, again, what is the problem with Christmas? Do we ever see problems with Chanukah?

Quite a few years ago I begged my father to take me to see the movie "Eight Crazy Nights." The humor of the movie aside, as we were walking out, the workers of the movie theater were telling everyone "Happy Chanukah." Now, did I have a problem with



this? No. Why? I went to a movie for which there would be a predominately Jewish audience. If workers said "Merry Christmas", though, after a movie about Christmas, there would be uproar. If I know someone is not Catholic or does not celebrate Christmas, of course I will not say "Merry Christmas" to them. But when I help out at a Catholic Youth Organization Basketball Program I am going to say "Merry Christmas" even though not everyone is Catholic. I should NOT be obligated to be politically correct. I am free to worship and say what I choose.

This movement towards consumerism and sensitivity is keeping from the true meaning of Christmas, but, of course, this "Happy Holidays" movement is doing so much more. We even have signs saying "Merry Xmas." What does that even mean? It is becoming so wrong to believe in religion anymore. I mean, businesses refer to it as the Christmas season, and it is seen as though they are pushing religion down people's throats, when they really aren't. The big issue today is the idea of religious freedom.

But it seems as though it is only happily given to the minority. The majority religion in this country is Christianity. Because they are the majority, they cannot do what they choose without anyone ridiculing and over-analyzing what they do.

This oversensitivity and consumerism is what is dramatically changing the idea of the season. In 2008, the American Family Association decided to launch a two-month boycott of the popular chain Gap, Inc., because of their "censorship" of Christmas. It's great that we in America can do that, but the point is, should Christmas be "censored," just because it is the majority? This whole political correctness of a religious holiday is not all right, especially when it seems to only apply to ONE religion, the majority religion. "Happy Holidays" is a great term, and it should be used, but it should not be substituted just because we are afraid to offend anyone.

# From the Desk of the President: Holiday Edition

By Nina Zito

Dear SJC Community,

With the end of the semester upon us, Christmas at SJC is here! I cannot believe it's already December and Christmas is three weeks away. There is no better place to ring in the holiday season than at SJC with a new family! There have been several events in the last few weeks to celebrate the holiday season.

On November 8th, C.A.B. started collecting magazines, board games, cards, Christmas decorations, books and cell phones to send overseas to soldiers stationed at a new base in Afghanistan. With the holidays approaching, it is important to remember and be thankful for those serving our country. To all of you who have family and friends in the military, I pray for your loved ones safe return during this holiday season.

On Wednesday, December 1st, SGA and C.A.B. hosted their annual tree lighting ceremony. Students, faculty and children from the Dillon Center gathered in Tuohy Hall to sing Christmas songs, listen to a Christmas story, light a dazzling Christmas tree and be surprised by a special guest, Elmo.

The SGA and C.A.B. Holiday Festival took place on Tuesday, December 7th in Tuohy Hall Auditorium. Every club or organization at SJC was required to create a basket that would be raffled off at the end of the festival. Every year, these baskets are the highlight of the festival with everyone asking, "... Who will be the big winner this year?" The festival is a time for students, faculty and staff to come together and celebrate the holiday season as one big happy family.

SGA hosted a Holiday Breakfast on Wednesday, December 8th for the faculty and staff of St. Joseph's College in the Student Life Suite. The Holiday Breakfast was a great way to thank the faculty and staff of SJC for all of their hard work and dedication throughout the year.

Lastly, SGA will hold their annual Senate Holiday Party on Monday, December 13th. Senate consists of class representatives and the executive board of each club or organization on campus. Club members will be served a delicious lunch from Nino's Italian Restaurant and have the opportunity to play SJC Jeopardy. Selected members of Senate and every club moderator will receive a surprise gift this year. (Hint: something to keep you warm during the winter!)

The holiday season is also a time to remember those less fortunate than us. On November 9th, Campus Ministries and the Child Study Club hosted their annual tag-making event. Be sure to pick up a tag on the tree in Tuohy Hall or in Evodio's Place if you would like to purchase a gift for someone less fortunate during the holiday season. All gifts will be donated to the Providence House in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn on December 14th.

It sounds like SJC knows how to celebrate with holiday cheer! On behalf of SGA and C.A.B., I would like to wish you and your family a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! Good luck on your final exams!

Happy Holidays!  
Nina Zito  
SGA President

## Hot Holiday Gifts for 2010

By Lisa Murphy

Let's go back 14 years: The 1996 holiday season saw the craze of Tickle Me Elmo (Tyco). In Fredericton, New Brunswick, some 300 Elmo-seeking people lined up outside a Wal-Mart store five hours before it opened. When the doors were finally opened, the shoppers stampeded into the store, trampling an employee so badly he had to be sent to the hospital.

The holiday season, what should be a joyous, peaceful, heartwarming time, often becomes a time of madness, mania, and mayhem. The need to buy people the "perfect" gift manages to take over consumers like some sort of zombie virus. So what items are people killing each other over this holiday season? What products are people willing to risk their lives for?

One of the hottest items of this holiday season is definitely the iPad from Apple. What Apple describes as a "magical and revolutionary product", the iPad lets users do almost anything. They can browse the web, watch movies, listen to music, play games, and more at 3G speeds on the slim, tablet-like contraption. With a starting price of \$499, this product is most likely on people's list of dream gifts. People are even losing body parts in

attempt of making their dream of having an iPad come true. In Denver, a 59-year-old man purchased an iPad at the Apple store in the mall and was near the parking lot when a thief grabbed the bag that was tied around his hand. The bag wouldn't come off of the man's hand and the thief pulled so hard that he ripped off part of the man's pinky! So if you are lucky enough to purchase or receive an iPad this holiday season, beware of thieves!

Some other hot items this season include:

- Nook eReader (Barnes & Noble)
- iPod Touch (Apple)
- Playstation 3 (Sony)
- The Kinect for Xbox (Microsoft)
- UGG Boots (UGG Australia)
- Net Books

So this holiday season, try not to get caught up in the madness and mayhem that comes with holiday shopping. Try to keep your spirits up, be thankful for what you have, and remember the true meaning of Christmas.

But as the song "Jingle Bell Rock" says, "What a bright time. It's the right time to rock the night away." So feel free to go a little nuts this holiday season ☐

Here's what some of your classmates are asking for/buying for others this year:

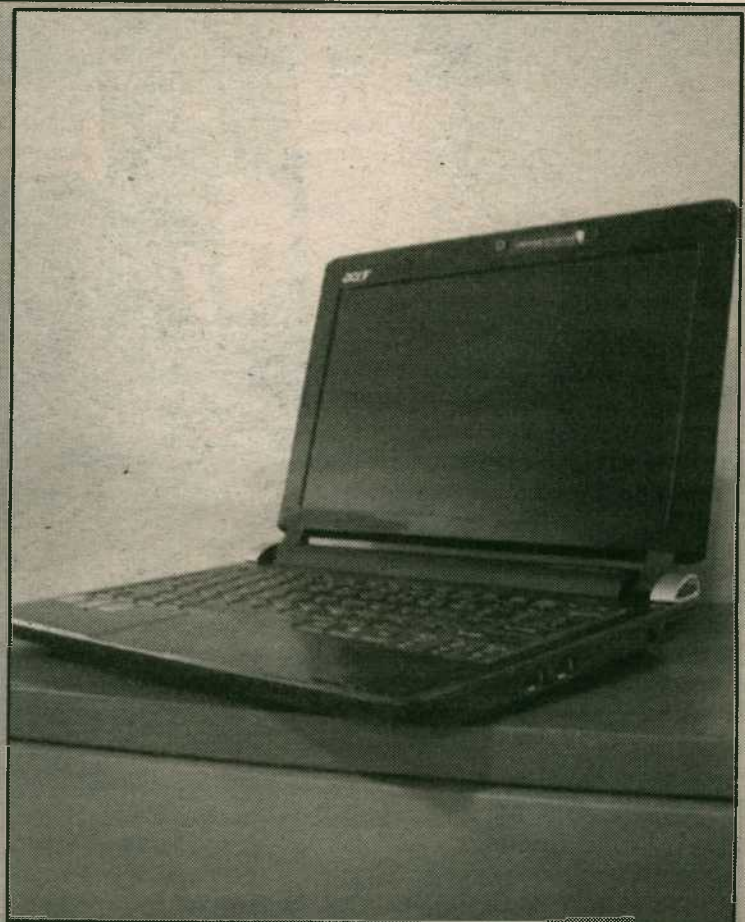
- "I am asking for a Nikon D7000 camera. I would die if I don't get it. I am looking forward to doing more traveling for the upcoming year." ~ Dashana Payne

- "The Flip video camera is definitely on my list. And some of the things I bought for others include apparel and designer bags." ~ Darlene Attard

- "I am mostly asking for clothes, but I also want a Bluetooth or some sort of head piece device for my cell phone for driving. I'm also asking for stuff for my trip to Italy, like outlet converters. And some of the gifts I am buying for people include a Playstation controller, iPod headphones, and probably clothes." ~Lizzy Fiorella

- "I didn't even think about what I'm buying anyone for Christmas yet but I am asking for a gold Michael Kors watch." ~Jenna DeFilippo

- "Well as gifts to give, I gave my friend a massage at this place by my house, another nail polish, stuff like that. I want Ugg slippers and things for my car." ~ Darcy Cee



Staff Photo

The Acer Netbook is just one of many holiday gift ideas flying off of shelves this season.



# “The Spirit” Staff’s Top 10: Holiday Songs

By Catherine Muldoon

While we were sitting around the Publications office recently, the conversation turned to Christmas and holiday music. Which songs do we love this time of year, and which songs make us want to drive off of a cliff? We soon got into a “spirit”ed debate about the best of the best, which led to this: our list of the Top Ten Holiday Songs of All Time (or at least, our ten favorites.) Enjoy!

### 10. Jingle Bell Rock (The cast of “Mean Girls”)

When “the Plastics” adorn their Santa hats and skimpy outfits to perform Jingle Bell Rock for the school, Lacey Chabert (Gretchen Wieners) kicks the CD player into another student’s head and the girls are left on stage with no music. But not to worry, Lindsey Lohan (Cady Heron) saves the day by singing the song accompanied by the other Plastics and Tina Fey (Ms. Norbury) on the piano. The scene is so ridiculously funny that it makes number 10 on our favorite Holiday song list.

### 9. The Chanukah Song (Adam Sandler)

This iconic song (parts 1, 2, and 3) names over 60 celebrities and their Jewish status. It brings recognition to other holidays besides Christmas when many of us forget that Christmas is not the only holiday of the season. The songs are bold and brassy and funny, making the Chanukah song number 9 on our list of Holiday songs.

### 8. Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays (\*NSYNC)

NSYNC was the biggest musical phenomenon of our generation, so who couldn’t love their biggest Christmas song? It has a catchy pop beat and the boy band harmonies bring us right back to the days of “Bye, Bye, Bye” and “No Strings Attached.” Who could ask for anything more? That is why Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays comes in at number 8 on our countdown.

### 7. Believe (Josh Groban, “The Polar Express” Soundtrack)

No one can deny that Josh Groban has the voice of an angel, and “The Polar Express” was such a lighthearted movie. The combination of the two produced a new favorite Holiday song. Believe comes in at number 7 on our countdown for its overall spirit and its inspirational lyrics.

### 6. What’s This? (“The Nightmare Before Christmas” Soundtrack)

It’s hard to decide if “The Nightmare before Christmas” falls under Christmas or Halloween, but everyone can agree that “What’s This?” is an amazing song, scary and innocent at the same time. Its creativity earns it the spot of number 6 on our countdown.

### 5. Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas (Frank Sinatra)

Now we’re making our way into the classic Christmas songs. This is one of the songs you hear and immediately know by the first note. It is a memorable song by an iconic artist. Clearly, it belongs on our Holiday Song List as number 5.

### 4. Happy Christmas (War is Over) (John Lennon)

There are some people who will not get to see their family and loved ones during Christmas because they are fighting for our freedom. John Lennon’s message reminds us to pray for those people every day, but especially during the Holidays. It is a beautiful song with an even more beautiful message, and it deserves its place at number 4 on our countdown.

### 3. White Christmas (Bing Crosby)

White Christmas is the most recorded song of all time, and Bing Crosby has the smoothest voice known to man. It is another song with a charming message, wishing everyone the simplest thing: snow on Christmas. As a child I thought it Christmas

couldn’t come if there was no snow. Bing Crosby’s White Christmas encompasses everyone’s Christmas wish for snow, and it is number 3 on our countdown.

### 2. O Holy Night (“Home Alone” Soundtrack)

Kevin wanders into church on Christmas Eve and the children’s choir sings “O Holy Night” as he speaks to the old man he was once terrified of. The children’s voices are so angelic, and the harmonies are so perfect, that it is a beautiful and serious break in an otherwise hilarious classic movie. “O Holy Night” by itself is a classic song that focuses on the birth of Christ. For this reason it is an amazing song, but when you add in one of the greatest holiday movies of all time, you get number 2 on our countdown.

### 1. Carol of the Bells (Trans Siberian Orchestra)

Do I even need to explain why this song is number 1? Take a classic instrumental piece of holiday music and add a rock and roll to make the greatest holiday song of all time. Epic Christmas.

(Editor’s Note: Did we leave something out? Is there something on our list that had no business being here? Let us know: [SJCNewspaper@student.sjcnj.edu](mailto:SJCNewspaper@student.sjcnj.edu))



Photo Credit: Robert Napolitano

Chapel Players musical director Scott Bataglia plays some of his own favorite Christmas songs at “Home for the Holidays.”

## Serenade to my Lady of Guadalupe

By Laura Martinez

The 12th of December is one of the most important dates celebrated in Mexico. It’s the feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe. The Mexican community and many followers celebrate this day with great honor and pride. In Mexico, many faithful believers go kneeled on their bloody knees to the “La Basílica de La Virgen de Guadalupe”. Many catholic Mexicans do this, because they make a promise to our Lady, such as to stop drinking alcohol, drugs, or to become a better person in return for that Our Lady of Guadalupe can help them get a job in the future, have a family, or many other things.

We believe Our Lady of Guadalupe is very powerful and miraculous. It all started on December 1531, when the Virgin Mary made her first apparition to the Mexican-Indian Juan Diego and asked him to tell the Bishop that was her desire to have a temple built in the “Cerro del Tepeyac” (Hill of the Tepeyac), because she wanted a church where people could go to her to seek love, compassion, and help from her; because she is our Mother, who watches over us and wishes us to be closer to her. When Juan Diego finally spoke to the Bishop, the



The Feast of the Lady of Guadalupe is a very important one to those of

all night serenading the Lady of Guadalupe with different types of music, and offering the most traditional Aztec and Mexican dances. It is with great pride that many Mexican-Americans call themselves “Guadalupeños”, meaning believers of Guadalupe.

